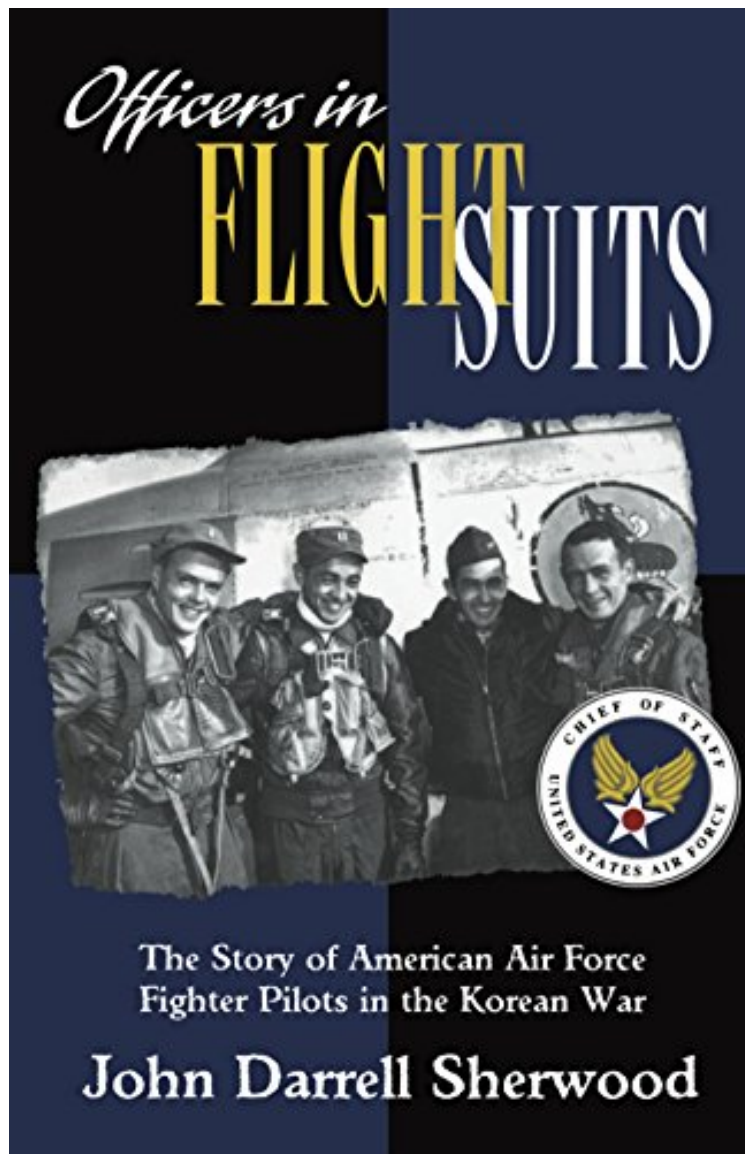


(Download ebook) Officers in Flight Suits: The Story of American Air Force Fighter Pilots in the Korean War

## Officers in Flight Suits: The Story of American Air Force Fighter Pilots in the Korean War

*Von John Darrell Sherwood*

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Von John Darrell Sherwood : Officers in Flight Suits: The Story of American Air Force Fighter Pilots in the Korean War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Officers in Flight Suits: The Story of American Air Force Fighter Pilots in the Korean War:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. To Fly and Fight--USAF Fighter Pilots in the Korean WarVon Ein KundeWhen the Korean War began in the summer of 1950, the United States Air Force was the youngest branch of the American military, having been created as a service coequal to the Army and Navy less than three years earlier. Although the operational history of the USAF and the experience of many of its officers stretched back into the time when it was a branch of the Army known as the United States Army Air Force, the USAF hadn't yet made its mark as a separate service. The Korean War came at a propitious time, giving the USAF a vehicle in which to shape itself as an institution. The fighter pilots who fought in the Korean War would become the leaders of the new Air Force. Their attitudes toward flying and toward the military in general would come to shape Air Force thinking over the next several decades. In this book John Sherwood has provided the reader with a close look at the pilots who flew fighters during the Korean War--pilots who, by their skills and attitudes, would establish a style for those who followed. This style is defined by the author as "flight suit attitude." He writes: Flight suit attitude ... was a sense of self-confidence and pride that verged on arrogance ... the aircraft of preference was the high-performance, single-seat fighter ... This culture placed a premium on cockiness and informality. A flight suit officer spent more time in a flight suit than in a uniform. In his world, status was based upon flying ability, not degrees, rank, or "officer" skills (p. 6). Where did this flight suit attitude develop? The author begins by examining the backgrounds of Air Force fighter pilots in this fledgling branch of the United States' military services. In a chapter entitled "An Absence of Ring-Knockers" he looks to a lower percentage of college-educated officers in the Air Force than in the Army or Navy, and particularly to the absence of academy graduates, as a contributing factor to a flight suit attitude. Success in this early Air Force was not based on a fraternity of academy graduates, indoctrinated in a set of shared military values; success was based, rather, on the ability to fly well and on the opportunity to participate in combat in Korea. The author presses home his point by looking at the backgrounds of eleven pilots who flew in Korea, perhaps the best known of whom are Robinson Risner and Earl Brown. Only one pilot whose experiences are described in this book came into the Air Force from West Point; many came from relatively humble backgrounds. Their reminiscences of life in training and combat are spread throughout the book, giving it a personal, anecdotal character. Pilot training is another factor that the author considers. In a chapter entitled "Stick and Rudder University," Sherwood examines the training given to Air Force pilots in the late 1940s and early 1950s and its contributions to the flight suit attitude. He notes that the majority of Air Force officers during the Korean War were pilots. Indeed, two-thirds of Air Force officers received their commission after completing the Aviation Cadet program, the emphasis of which was on flying skills. "Ancestry, education, and prior military training or military academy experience had very little to do with one's status in the Air Force ..." (p. 39). The primary concern was how well one could fly an airplane. The result for the Air Force was a more casual junior officer than the usual Army lieutenant or Navy ensign. In his consideration of the air war over Korea for fighter pilots, the author looks separately at the experiences of those who flew fighter-interceptors and those who flew fighter-bombers. The former group garnered much of the glory. The air combat of F-86 against MiG is the image which springs to mind when one thinks of the Air Force experience in Korea. This image has been reinforced in the public mind through literature and movies. It is maintained within the Air Force as well by such devices as art on the walls of the Pentagon or a Korean War vintage F-86 on a pedestal at the front gate of Nellis AFB. These F-86/MiG engagements were the very essence of the continuing Air Force image of a fighter pilot. The experiences of the fighter-bomber pilots in Korea were of another sort. Flying somewhat lower-performance aircraft than the F-86, such as the F-80 or F-84, the pilots in fighter-bombers faced a more hazardous day-to-day life from ground fire. Sherwood notes that "... only 147 Air Force planes were lost in air-to-air combat; by comparison, over 816 planes were shot down by ground fire" (pp 98-99). These pilots were often given less status than the F-86 pilots, who sometimes referred to them derogatorily as "straight wings" in officer clubs. The stress of the hazardous flying also led to a higher incidence of mental illness among fighter-bomber pilots. This dual nature of the fighter pilots' experiences lends an interesting element to the book. The pilots who flew fighter-bombers had no less of a flight suit attitude for their experiences, however. Throughout this book one also finds ample evidence of the social life of pilots during the Korean War. In a chapter entitled "Thunderboxes and Sabre Dancers" Sherwood looks at such elements of time spent away from the cockpit as bases, the O clubs and day rooms, the R R opportunities in Japan, and even at female companionship of several very different types. But all seem very secondary to the experiences of flying fighters. Even the rustic conditions at Korean air bases served to remind the pilots that their primary reason for being in Korea was to fly fighter aircraft. Sherwood concludes his book with a look at the careers of the eleven pilots after the Korean War. All but one remained in the Air Force. Most discovered that the flight suit attitude they embraced early in their flying careers did not always serve them well in the developing bureaucracy of the United States Air Force. But most maintained this attitude anyhow, even when a promotion might be lost as a result. Almost inevitably, with few exceptions, they didn't rise above the rank of colonel. It is at that stage of one's career, as one of the pilots noted, where "MiGs start to matter less and power politics take over" (p. 163). But the author concludes that the presence of the pilots who flew fighters in the Korean War contributed much to the shaping of the Air Force. Interestingly, the obituary of a former Korean War era fighter pilot appeared briefly in recent news, the report neatly reinforcing some of the concepts in Sherwood's book. \_U.S. News World Report\_ noted the passing at the age of 70 of

one John Boyd, Colonel, USAF, retired. A USAF fighter pilot in Korea and, later, an instructor pilot, Boyd's military influence ranged from the development of doctrines of air combat through the design of planes to his service in the Pentagon, where he and members of a so-called "Fighter Mafia" apparently helped prevail upon the Air Force to build the F-16 and A-10. His influence after his retirement extended to Congress and to people like Dick Cheney, who listened to and learned from Boyd's ideas on historical trends in military success presented in briefings. Boyd seems the epitome of an officer in a flight suit, the type of pilot Sherwood describes so well. John Sherwood has written an excellent book, combining the military history of USAF fighter operations in the Korean War with the social context of the pilots who flew the fighters. He has contributed much towards a better understanding of the developmental years of the United States Air Force. This book is well worth the reading for anyone with an interest in the Korean War, in the United States Air Force, or in those elusive qualities of character on which larger organizations turn.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Very enlightening, and brought back SAD moments of REALITYS. Von Ein Kunde Personal thoughts while reading "The Story of American Air Force Fighter Pilots", Usually after the Flyboys, We found dead civilians burnout villages, the CCF (Chinese Communist Forces) would be in conceal bunker,, waiting for us. For the first two years after my return to the states, about every night I would relive some horrible frontline experience in a nightmare. One night, I saw people dressed in white coming out of a cave. They were covered with blood. Some carried what must have been little babies. Then there was the little girl sitting by the side of a road eating grasshoppers that she roasted in a tin can over a fire that had once been her home. There were dead, burned, and decapitated bodies all around her. They were everywhere. I glimpsed in the direction of some of my squad members. They appeared to be indifferent like they saw but didn't see. Occasionally a sniper would aim a shot in our direction, or there would be a long burst from a concealed machine gun somewhere near, at which time we would dive for cover among the dead bodies and commence firing in the direction we suspected the enemy gunner to be concealed. Looking back in the direction that the little girl had been, I saw that she was still sitting there eating the grasshoppers, seemingly undisturbed. There were other small children about, crying as they crawled over dead bodies, searching for their mothers or family members.. Then would come the command "Ok Let's go, soldier, let's go!" and I would run to catch up with my squad that was following behind the tanks.. Yes, Wars is Hell very crude. But if it wasn't for our Air Force many of us Infantry ground forces wouldn't be alive.. (One of those forgotten warriors, of a forgotten wars) Now, a Pacifist

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Officers in Flight Suits: Excellent Reading Von Truett Guthrie Many authors, such as Robert Futrell and Larry Davis, have written very thorough histories of the air war in Korea, with great detail of dates, missions flown, technical data, etc., but this is the first book on social and cultural histories of that subject. Unlike World War II, the exploits of fighter pilots in Korea overshadowed the bombing campaigns. This book is an extensive examination of the "flight suit attitude," a combination of cockiness and pride, that has always characterized the fighter pilot. "Officers in Flight Suits" details these pilot's social background, aviation training, combat effectiveness, and off-duty activities, focusing on eleven living participants (such as Robinson Risner) after Sherwood interviewed approximately fifty flight suit officers. The air war in Korea is best remembered for its legendary air battles between the American F-86 Sabre and the Russian built MiG-15, which Sherwood emphasizes, but he also covers the fighter-bomber pilots involved in air interdiction. I have visited by phone with Mr. Sherwood several times and he is exceptionally knowledgeable and helpful with my hobby of giving programs on the Korean Airwar. This is a great book! If you have an interest in the Korean War and haven't read this book, buy it now!

Kurzbeschreibung The United States Air Force fought as a truly independent service for the first time during the Korean War. Ruling the skies in many celebrated aerial battles, even against the advanced Soviet MiG-15, American fighter pilots reigned supreme. Yet they also destroyed virtually every major town and city in North Korea, demolished its entire crop irrigation system and killed close to one million civilians. The self-confidence and willingness to take risks which defined the lives of these men became a trademark of the fighter pilot culture, what author John Darrell Sherwood here refers to as the flight suit attitude. In *Officers in Flight Suits*, John Darrell Sherwood takes a closer look at the flight suit officer's life by drawing on memoirs, diaries, letters, novels, unit records, and personal papers as well as interviews with over fifty veterans who served in the Air Force in Korea. Tracing their lives from their training to the flight suit culture they developed, the author demonstrates how their unique lifestyle affected their performance in battle and their attitudes toward others, particularly women, in their off-duty activities.

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Laqueur, Professor of History, University of California, Berkeley"This is a book that gives profoundly important answers, but not easy ones. Six leading figures discuss the American death penalty in this volume. All six leave us wondering whether the simple stories we like to tell can possibly be adequate.8221; -James Q. Whitman, Ford Foundation Professor of Comparative and Foreign Law, Yale Law School"Reading this book is like attending a highly charged graduate-level symposium. The essays are fascinating and well written but assume familiarity with the material... What distinguishes this volume is the contributing editors' refusal to accept conventional analysis of the death penalty... Academics and serious scholars of the death penalty will appreciate this innovative approach. A worthy addition to the historical analysis of the death penalty for knowledgeable readers."-Library Journal, Sherwood provides a definitive account of Air Force pilots, their training, operations and battles, in the Korean War. -"Virginia Pilot""An extraordinary synthesis of social and military history which throws new light on the story of the air combat in Korea. -Ronald H. Spector, author of "After Tet: The Bloodiest Year in Vietnam""Sherwood paints a vivid and realistic portrait of the culture of Korean War pilots, examining the motivations, their methods, and the effect that being a fighter pilot had on their personal lives." -"Air Force""Sherwood thoroughly documents the superb performance of air force fighter pilots during the Korean War. They met the best pilots China and the Soviet Union had to offer and won. 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